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For Immediate Release  
August 29, 2005

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**Environment Department Requests Comment on Draft Closure and Cleanup  
Permit for Fort Wingate in McKinley County**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has released for public comment a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste facility permit for closure, post-closure care and corrective action at the U.S. Department of Army Fort Wingate Depot Activity (FWDA) located in McKinley County, New Mexico.

The draft Permit requires closure of an Open Burn/Open Detonation Unit and the surrounding explosives kickout area and comprehensive investigation and cleanup of contaminated sites at FWDA. The investigation and cleanup requirements include investigation and remediation of ground water and sites contaminated during historic operations. The draft Permit also sets a schedule for the initiation of environmental cleanup work across the entire FWDA facility.

This is the second issuance of a draft Permit for FWDA. The initial draft Permit was issued in September 2004. After receiving comments on the initial draft Permit, discussions were conducted between NMED and commenters including representatives from the U.S. Army, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Interior between April and July 2005. This second draft Permit includes changes to the Permit based on the results of those discussions.

NMED is inviting the public to submit written comments on the draft Permit during a sixty-day public comment period that starts today. Members of the public may submit to NMED written comments on the draft Permit at any time during the public comment period. NMED will issue a final Permit after considering all written comments received from the public. NMED will schedule a hearing, if requested and granted by the NMED Secretary, after the end of the public comment period.

Both the draft Permit and the administrative record may be reviewed at the NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau located at 2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-6303, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Procedures for submitting written comments, requests for a public hearing, and a copy of the draft RCRA Permit are also available

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at the NMED website: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/HWB/fwdaperm.html>

Written comments and requests for a public hearing will be accepted until **October 28, 2005, at 5:00 p.m.**

FWDA has been in existence since 1848. Operations at FWDA have included generation, treatment, storage, disposal, and other management of solid and hazardous wastes including munitions and other explosives-related wastes. These wastes were generated, stored, treated and disposed of at numerous sites located throughout FWDA and have been classified by the NMED as solid waste management units (SWMUs) or Areas of Concern (AOCs). The types of hazardous and solid wastes that have been handled and disposed of include explosive compounds, metals, volatile organic compounds, and semivolatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls, nitrates, and perchlorate.

For additional information, please contact James Bearzi, Chief, NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau, at (505) 428-2512, or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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